

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

What is claimed is:

1. (currently amended) A method for use by a first entity to benefit a second entity in the operation of an e-commerce enabled web site, the method comprising the steps of:

allowing a user of the e-commerce enabled web site to select at least one of a product and a service for purchase;

selecting a second entity; and

providing a benefit to the second entity.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of prompting the user to select a second entity before the user can complete the purchase.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of prompting the user to select a second entity after the user completes the purchase.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a second entity list that is selected on the basis of an equitable selection method.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising the equitable selection method including the step of selecting a time-convenient number of second entities on a cyclical basis[;] .

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 5, further comprising the cyclical basis ~~weighting~~ being determined according to the value of the products purchased by the second entity from the first entity for a period prior to the user selecting the at least one product or service for purchase.

7. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of randomizing the second entity list to produce a randomized list of second entities and selecting at least one second entity from the randomized list of second entities.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising the equitable selection method including the step of selecting a time-convenient number of second entities based on whether a second entity is within at least one of a geographically-convenient proximity and a politically convenient proximity to the user.

9. (canceled)

10. (canceled)

11. (canceled)

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~compensating~~ providing a benefit to the second entity is lowering the unit cost for the at least one product or service for purchase.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~compensating~~ providing a benefit to the second entity is paying the second entity a percentage of a purchase price of the at least one product or service for purchase.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~compensating~~ providing a benefit to the second entity is shipping the at least one product or service for purchase along with advertising about the second entity.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~compensating~~ providing a benefit to the second entity is sending the user a coupon for ~~products~~ the product or service sold by the second entity.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~compensating~~ providing a benefit to the second entity is sending the second entity information about the user.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of monitoring ~~compensation~~ the benefit to the second entity for abuses.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein in response to finding an abuse by a second entity, taking a corrective action.

20. (original) The method of claim 19, wherein the corrective action is removing a second entity committing an abuse from the second entity list.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 19, wherein the corrective action is reducing ~~compensation~~ the benefit to a second entity committing an abuse.

22. (currently amended) A method for use by a first entity to offset a loss of a second entity in the operation of an e-commerce enabled web site, the method comprising the steps of:

allowing a user of the e-commerce enabled web site to select at least one of a product and a service for purchase;

prompting the user to select a second entity from a second entity list;

compensating the user for selecting a second entity; and
compensating the second entity.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein compensating the user is providing the user with a discount on the at least one product or service.

24. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein compensating the user is providing the user with a credit for a future purchase.

25. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein compensating the user is entering the user into a contest.

26. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein compensating the user is having the user win a prize.

27. (canceled)

28. (canceled)

29. (currently amended) A method for use by a first entity to offset a loss of a second entity in the operation of an e-commerce enabled web site by the first entity, the method comprising the steps of:

allowing a user of the e-commerce enabled web site to select at least one of a product and a service for purchase;

prompting the user to select a second entity from a second entity list, the second entities on the second entity list being one or both of included and ranked on the list according to incentives provided by the second entity to the first entity;

compensating the second entity.

30. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the incentives are advertising placements related to first entity's products displayed by the second entity.

31. (canceled)

32. (canceled)

33. (currently amended) A computer software product for use by a first entity to offset a loss of a second entity in the operation of an e-commerce enabled web site, the computer software product having machine executable code configured for:

allowing a user of an e-commerce enabled web site to select at least one of a product and a service for purchase;

during a checkout process for the at least one product, prompting the user to select a second entity from a second entity list; and
compensating the second entity.